

Ireland: Human-Animal Interactions Education Abroad

What did I learn?

This program allowed to me to learn so much about animal uses, production, regulation, companionship and so much more in Ireland. As an Animal Science major, this is the kind of information I needed to globalize my career. And while it would take me forever to explain everything I learned abroad I can leave you with two major lessons I learned:

1. How much I truly don't know that is out there to learn.
2. Stepping out of your comfort zone will result in growth you didn't know you were capable of.

What motivated me to do this project?

After my first education abroad program I got a taste for how much I loved to travel and learn about the places I could go. This program was perfect for me to study a subject I already had an interest for while visiting somewhere new. There are several animal science abroad programs, but this one covered a breadth of species and purposes which is exactly the diversity I was looking for.

Project Description

For my project I took course in Human-Animal Interactions then went abroad to Ireland with the Department of Animal Sciences to do study that same thing. While abroad for 9 days we visited zoos, animal rehabilitation centers, multiple farms, the University College of Dublin, and even some tourist attractions. The purpose of these activities were to evaluate the relationship between humans and animals and how interactions differ in another country.



My favorite part

To pick one thing that I enjoyed above all else is really difficult. I appreciated each of these experiences in a different way. However, I will narrow it down to my favorite tourist visit and my favorite animal experience. As a tourist, I really enjoyed visiting the Blarney Castle. While the heights and getting to kiss the Blarney Stone made me a little nervous, I had never had an opportunity like that before and thoroughly enjoyed it. My favorite farm visit was the beef farm we got to see. I grew up on a small beef farm, so this was the subject I was most knowledgeable in and really enjoyed learning about how they do things the same or differently. I really got to interact with the farmer and I appreciated that.



What was transformational?

It may sound cliché, but being in a new place with new beautiful experiences absolutely transforms you. You gain an appreciation for things you never knew existed and begin to understand that there is so much more out there for you to be exposed to. As someone who was studying a specific topic, seeing it from another perspective has the same effect. I found several times that the Irish have different opinions on how to use, raise, and care for animals. In some ways I agreed, while in others I disagreed. But what mattered most is that being in that position made me become someone who can take a step back and evaluate.

It made me realize that there are other ideas out there that we don't use in the United States. But it also made me appreciate some of the things we have access to for production and care. Going abroad gave me a whole new perspective to look into.



Name: Lauren Hamer

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STEP Faculty Member: Dr. David Hedgecoth

Major: Animal Sciences



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Second-year Transformational
Experience Program